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Dr. Joseph Janni retires as director of AFOSR

by Laura Coens, AFOSR Public Affairs



Dr. Joseph Janni

ARLINGTON, VA. — Dr. Joseph F. Janni, a member of the Senior Executive Service, retired as director of the Air Force Research Laboratory's Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) on Mar. 1, 2001, after serving this nation for 40 years. His contributions as an employee with the U.S. Air Force included serving as director of AFOSR, Chief Scientist of the Air Force Phillips Laboratory, Chief Scientist of the Air Force Space Technology Center, Chief of Satellite Assessments, and Research Physicist at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory.

Janni began his civilian career in 1967 as a physicist, immediately following five years as an active duty Air Force officer when he was a principal investigator for radiation measurement experiments aboard two Gemini orbital flights and one Air Force satellite. Upon transitioning to civilian status, he developed advanced physics on the interaction of radiation with matter and created comprehensive computer codes to predict the three-dimensional energy deposition in satellites from space radiation.

From 1967 to 1984, Janni served in various civilian research and leadership capacities of progressively greater responsibility at the Air Force Weapons Laboratory. His accomplishments included identifying space radiation hazards to the proposed Air Force Manned Orbiting Laboratory, being a principal investigator for radiation measurement experiments aboard Skylab, and evaluating magnetic field data obtained from hot dense plasmas generated by laser beams. He also conducted extensive studies in space systems survivability, and developed highly successful methods to protect satellites from space radiation that are still used today. His satellite survivability and lifetime assessments proved themselves in direct applications in over three dozen United States satellite systems. In 1983, he received the highest award in the Laboratory for the most outstanding achievements in science and engineering.

In 1984, he was promoted to the executive rank of Scientific Professional (ST) and became the Chief Scientist (the most senior scientific position) of the Air Force Space Technology Center. He developed new space technology programs in electronics, microwaves, and advanced computation. In 1989, he received the University of New Mexico's Distinguished Alumni Award for being one of their top 100 living graduates. He subsequently became Chief Scientist of the Phillips Laboratory at the time of its creation in 1990. In this capacity, he provided scientific advice and technical guidance for major scientific programs in directed energy and space technology development. He oversaw all program and project research to ensure a well-integrated laboratory program, including emphasis on fostering basic research and the transition of research accomplishments into Air Force systems.

Janni was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 1996 when he became the Director of AFRL's AFOSR, headquartered in Arlington, Va. As director, he managed the entire basic research program for the Air Force. He was responsible for 1500 grants, contracts, and projects annually at 300 research organizations. He brought about over 500 technology transfers, transitions and product applications. Six Nobel prizes were awarded for AFOSR-sponsored research during his tenure. His management of the AFOSR London and Tokyo offices provided access to worldwide research to the direct benefit of the entire Air Force technology community.

Janni has authored 30 scientific journal articles and technical reports. He received his bachelor's degree in general physics from the University of Portland in 1962; his master's degree in 1971; and his Ph.D. in 1979 from the University of New Mexico. He is an active member of five scientific research societies. @